

SOUTH CAROLINA—EDGEFIELD DISTRICT.

MEMORIAL

OF

THE CITIZENS OF EDGEFIELD,

AGAINST

THE WOOLLENS BILL.

DECEMBER 27, 1827.

Read, and laid upon the table.

WASHINGTON :

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1827.

SOUTH CAROLINA REGISTERED DISTRICT

REGISTERED

THE CITIZENS OF EDGEFIELD

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THE WOOLLEN MILL

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MEMORIAL.

To the Honorable the members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled:

The memorial of the undersigned, citizens of Edgefield district, in the State of South Carolina,

RESPECTFULLY REPRESENTS :

That, as we deem it to be our duty, so we know it to be our right, to remonstrate to your honorable bodies, against both the *principles* and *policy* of the bill introduced at the last session of Congress, commonly called "The Woollens Bill."

We do this, because we are fully aware that the subject will be again presented to your consideration, with all the additional weight that can be thrown on one side of the question by the numerous petitions and meetings of the manufacturers. Urging their peculiar interests with all the energy that *paucity of numbers, magnitude of interest, and unity of action*, can enforce, we are not at all astonished that this systematized corps have so much tended to swerve our national councils from those fundamental principles of natural justice and equity, on which our Government is bottomed.

Seeing these things, and knowing that six of the Southern States now pay, annually, more than 250,000 dollars as imposts, on the importation of the single article of coarse woollens, (the especial object of this bill,) we would deem ourselves indifferent to the vital interests of our rising families and country, were we longer to remain silent.

To sacrifice our wealth and our population to the clear necessities of our Government, is generous and patriotic; but to suffer the former to be drawn from us, and the latter to be worn down, by any means used for the benefit of *a few*, without a murmur, is cowardly.

The operation of things is now peculiarly unfavorable to us. Our exports of cotton amount to upwards of 20 millions of dollars, and of course we pay a corresponding portion of the expenses of the country, in the consumption of the imports; yet almost all the disbursements of the Government take place north of us; and why, in the name of justice, is this bill now to be added to our burdens? If this system is continued, you must force our population westward, or, if they remain here, compel them, according to the natural order of things, to

decline : for, decrease the means of *subsistence*, and you must decrease our *numbers* ; and this we complain of as the greatest of political evils. This may be slow and silent in its effects, but it is nevertheless *certain* and *deadly*. Draw away the money of our country, no matter in how small quantities, and you drain the circulating blood from our system. But we are told that it is finally to operate for our good, and will enable the poor man to obtain for two dollars, that for which he now pays three. When we get an article from England, under a duty of 30 or 40 per cent., and that duty is raised to 80 or 100, we cannot, for our lives, understand the logic that we shall then be enabled to get it cheaper than before. We want no set of manufacturers to *force* from us a certain portion of our income, for their own use, and then tell us, "that we must consent to it, as it is for our good : for really we know not what is our own interests on this subject ;" thus adding insult to injury.

If our climate and soil are better adapted to growing the superfluities of life than that of the manufacturing sections, and we therefore can command more wealth through our agriculture, *if let alone* ; and they, from their natural water power and population, are better suited for manufactures ; are *we*, therefore, to bear the burden of establishing them ? Justice revolts at the idea. Ours are, in truth, the gifts of Providence, and we recognize no right in Government to alter or equalize the distribution of his Almighty power. The first sources of wealth are from the soil, and we never delegated to our rulers any power to take from the tillers of the earth their income, to create a new set of laborers. We need not inform your enlightened bodies that this second class of laborers, in the natural course of things, would be supplied from surplus capital and surplus population ; and when they are supported from any other sources, it will be the growth of an artificial hot bed, which must be an expense and a sacrifice to the original and great mass of laborers. When, then, a few combine to aggrandize themselves at our expense, we must unite to counteract their influence.

The information that is received on the subject of manufactures, is derived necessarily from the manufacturers themselves, and is it not the nature of man to favor himself ? If they make 50 per cent. on their capital, would they not desire still more ? And as we are agriculturists, spread over a wide surface, and as *they* are comparatively few in numbers, however powerful in wealth, with the advantage of union and concert, they can still hope to gain whatever they wish, however unequal or exorbitant ; and this is one great reason why they have succeeded thus far.

If your honorable bodies were to offer, as a bounty, 20 dollars for every hundred yards of domestic woollens, and our manufacturers, through this means, were to receive six millions annually, enabling them to line their rivers with thriving villages, the whole country would pronounce it *unconstitutional* ; but, really, we can see no practical difference between this, and where (in articles we must have) the duties are raised from 30 to 100 per cent., thus producing prohibition,

drawing the 30 per cent. from our treasury, and giving it, with the additional duty, to the manufacturer. If there be a reason why the former should be unconstitutional, the same reason must exist against the latter.

A certain class of our population are clothed as cheaply as possible, say at ten dollars each, and if, by this duty on woollens, (which principally operates on the poor,) any thing is added to their expense, we see no difference in the effects between this and a direct tax on each; and this we protest against as unnecessary and unjust.

We believe we have higher duties now, as mere protecting duties, than any other country. In England or France, for example, where the duty may be 60 per cent., yet there is perhaps a direct or internal tax amounting to 40 per cent.; making the avowed protecting duty, in reality, but 20 per cent. Whereas we have no direct taxes, and every duty of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. operates as a protecting duty to that extent. Now, if our manufacturers cannot sustain themselves in competition with foreigners, who have to pay their own taxes, together with ours, it is directly against the interests of the nation to sustain them. They then become sores on the body politic, which draw their heated and morbid action from the consumption of other parts of the system, thus paralyzing the natural vigor of the whole.

The manufacturers of wool ask for protection, and say their capital is unproductive without it; and this they allege in the face of the admitted fact, that, since the tariff of 1824, the capital in the woollen business has risen from 10 to 40 millions. But why may not we, on a like principle, ask also for a protection, when our capital will now produce not more than 4 per cent.? We are all citizens of the Union, entitled to common rights and privileges, and if any are to be assisted on the score of *policy*, why not the *larger* portion? But is it not clear that, when the capital of New England continues to be vested in manufactures, and still the owners say they cannot exist, their *words* and *acts* are in direct contradiction? or it is a censure on the natural sagacity and close calculating powers of our Northern brethren. It is against common sense to suppose that men of intelligence will *continue* to increase their capital in that which yields no profit, but is an expense, where there are so many new avenues to wealth: to believe this, and then to see the whole Eastern section embellished with rising villages, where there is nothing to support them but manufactures, is too monstrous for credulity itself. If they had even increased their manufactures to too great an extent, and thereby suffer, let them bear it: for we know of no right in Government to pay men for their avarice or want of judgment. We may emphatically ask, what class of men are there that do not now suffer? *None*, we verily believe, *but the moneyed monopolists of the North and East*. But we have seen it recently stated by some distinguished converts to the manufacturing monopoly, that the manufacturers of wool have claims to the protection of Government, because Great Britain has decreased her tax on the raw material. This we protest against as arrant sophistry: for it must have been known to those who advance it, that that will only

protect the manufacturers of *fine* woollens ; and it is the second *minimum* of the woollens bill, which includes the largest portion of woollens imported into the United States, and which, under a minimum disguise, imposes a duty of from $37\frac{1}{2}$ to $139\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., against which we solemnly raise our protest. Even admitting what is advanced to be true, we do not admit the principle that Government is bound to protect any class of citizens from the irregularities or policy of any foreign Government. As well might we claim protection from the irregularities of any set of men controlling the *cotton* trade in foreign markets. This is indeed one of the risks of the manufacturer, which he knew before he entered into the business, and of course there is no obligation to sustain him, if he loses.

We earnestly solicit the attention of the members to the injurious effects on our common country, where one section MAY vote away six millions to a manufacturing section, in expectation that the latter section may vote with them on the great questions arising on the public lands in the West, involving perhaps the gift of millions. *We* then stand in the position of "hewers of wood and drawers of water." This would be creating a system of patronage which would wear away the substantial land-marks of liberty. We want not freedom *in name*, but *in fact*. Abstract liberty, like all other abstractions, has no existence. We want it in something tangible ; in the just and equal protection of our rights and property.

We protest against all prohibitions, as diminishing the *revenue* of the Government, as decreasing our imports and, consequently, the commerce of the country : for it is our vessels principally which bring our imports ; decrease the latter, and you diminish the former. This, then, must *weaken* our Navy, that great, safe, and successful arm of our defence : for from whence is it that we draw those practised seamen, indispensable for our Navy, but from our *commerce* ? All history shows that no nation in modern times can sustain herself without a Navy. We protest against England's being held out as an example for us to follow in manufactures : for although almost all her enlightened statesmen, and all her scientific writers, now condemn the *restrictive system*, at which our Eastern brethren are now so eagerly grasping, we deprecate the idea of being *forced* into that *artificial* state of existence, from which even she is now seeking to disenthrall herself. Derange her trade and you throw upon her community a miserable starving mob of manufacturers, moving through the land with the desolation of famine. Ours will not be a poor unarmed crowd : with the rights of armed freemen, they will sweep onward with the convulsive fury of the living storm. We protest against a system which naturally, in its progress, brings down the lofty independence of *a man*, and converts him into a mere mechanical engine administering cotton to a spinning jenny.

We protest against the shallow idea of a system, forced upon us under the imposing name of "American," and which, whilst it wrings from industry its hardest earnings, we are told, in the end, is to make us "independent." We want not the inglorious independence of a

nation, who, through a mistaken, selfish policy, slumbers within her own borders. We want a free trade, and a liberal exchange of every thing, with a name known in every land, and a commerce felt on every sea. We are more than willing to pay duties for the support of our Government ; but not for the sustenance of a moneyed, speculating aristocracy. We are willing to support manufactures to supply the essentials of a war, when we are involved in such a contest, or about to approach one ; but, as to the great pretext advanced in favor of the manufacturing system, that such is the policy of this nation, with a sparse population, extending over more than a million of square miles, to be raised into existence, and fed, at the expense of every other great interest, we most solemnly protest against it.

We are no factionists. We think it is our interest, as we know it to be our desire, to keep in close friendship and union with all parts of our *now* happy country ; but we can never feel it to be our interest or our desire to sacrifice our property, and, with it, our population and strength, to what we know to be alone the interest of the monopolists of any section. In defence of principle against a petty tax on tea, the chivalry of the South was found freely braving the gash of death, in the dreadful field of battle. There is now a tax proposed more insupportable, and, if its principles are once admitted, what guaranty have we that they will not be pushed to any extent which avarice may claim, or usurpation sanction ? This would be making us, although not in name, yet to all intents and purposes, *colonists* to an overbearing majority ; and we have not yet so far sunk from the high inheritance of our ancestors, as to live in an inglorious bondage. We, therefore, most respectfully, but earnestly, pray and remonstrate, that your honorable bodies will, in arresting the contemplated bill, reject a system which cannot but be productive of the most injurious consequences to the true policy and lasting welfare of our happy nation.

[Signed by a number of the inhabitants of Edgefield district.]

